

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00912 141211Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 141050Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2424

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0912

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI

SUBJECT: LIBYAN REACTION TO DISAPPROVAL OF NORTHROP PAGE  
CONTRACT

1. DEPT'S REVERSAL OF ITS APPROVAL OF NORTHROP PAGE CONTRACT  
WILL COME AS A BLOW TO PRO-U.S. ELEMENTS IN THE LIBYAN MILITARY,  
AND WILL CONFIRM OTHERS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING QADHAFI, IN THEIR  
OPINION THAT, AS ARAFAT PHRASED IT IN A SPEECH HERE IN MAY,  
NOTHING GOOD CAN EVER COME FROM THE U.S.

2. THE MILITARY WILL BE PARTICULARLY UNHAPPY BECAUSE  
THE AIR DEFENSE PROJECT HAS HIGH PRIORITY. AS WE UNDERSTAND  
IT, NORTHROP WAS GOING TO INTEGRATE FRENCH EQUIPMENT ALREADY  
HERE, INCLUDING THE MIRAGES, WITH NEW SOVIET MISSILES AND  
RADAR THE LIBYANS HAVE ACQUIRED. WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL  
FOR NORTHROP PAGE COULD SET BACK THIS PROJECT FOR SOME TIME,  
LEAVING THE LIBYANS FEELING VULNERABLE, UNLESS A FRENCH OR  
BRITISH COMPANY CAN STEP NN. SOME LIBYANS ARE BOUND TO  
WONDER WHETHER WE EVER INTENDED TO LET NORTHROP PAGE DO THE  
WORK AND WHETHER THE WHOLE THING WAS A CONSPIRACY FROM THE  
BEGINNING.

3. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS WHAT, IF ANYTHING, QADHAFI  
MIGHT DO IN RETALIATION. THE ODDS STILL SEEM AGAINST HIS  
BREAKING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THE CLOSER HE GETS TO THE  
SOVIETS, THE MORE HE NEEDS RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. FOR BALANCE.

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A BREAK WOULD BE UNPOPULAR HERE WITH HIS DOMESTIC OPINION.

ONE HUNDRED PERCENT NATIONALIZATION OF ONE OF THE U.S. OIL COMPANIES OPERATING HERE IS PROBABLY NOT AN OPTION ANY MORE.

4. TAKEN TOGETHER WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON'S BLUNT TALK JULY 24 WITH THE LIBYAN CHARGE ON U.S.-LAR RELATIONS, WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL TO NORTHROP PAGE BRINGS THE BATTLE LINES BETWEEN US AND QADHAFI INTO SHARPER FOCUS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS HAS OCCURRED DURING THE ANNUAL BUILD-UP OF NATIONALIST FERVOR BEFORE REGIME'S SEPT 1 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS.

5. TO OFFSET THIS BLOW WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME EMPHASIS ON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYA IN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FIELDS. ONLY GESTURE WHICH OCCURS TO US AT MOMENT WOULD BE TO TELL LIBYANS WE AGREE TO REMOVING LIMIT ON THE SIZE OF THEIR MISSION IN WASHINGTON, IN RESPONSE TO THEIR REMOVAL OF LIMITS ON SIZE OF EMBASSY TRIPOLI. AS DEPT WILL RECALL, LIBYANS HAVE TOLD US THEY WANT TO SEND MORE PEOPLE TO TAKE CARE OF THAT STUDENT PROGRAM AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES.  
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